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ABSTRACT

This volume examines learning, teaching, and reflective practice. It is a personal account of a summer institute held in 1989 during which 21 teachers engaged in an exploration of writing and reading. Among metaphors discussed at the institute, one of the most powerful was the notion of teaching/learning being created from a fabric of interwoven conversations--a metaphor which highlights the social character of teaching/learning and the fundamental role of language in the process. Much of this book, which is written to be read like a novel, is told through conversations with and among the teachers; through reflective self-dialogue, and through conversations with the writings of many and varied authors including a few film makers. (Through this means, the book inquires into: (1) practice, theory, and the transaction between them; (2) pedagogical assumptions; (3) contradictions in practice; (4) what it means to be a theory-driven teacher; (5) the good teacher as improvisor; (6) Overall goals in terms of growth, awareness, reflection, commitment, and engagement; (7) complexities of the teaching act; (8) decisions teachers must make; and (9) personal and professional growth. Following a foreword by Russell A. Hunt, the book is organized into 14 chapters: Taking Off, Preparing the Environment, Opening Moves, Things Take Time, Juggling, Flying Kites, You're Always Right and You're Always Wrong, Interlude, Letting Go, Holding In, Teachable Moments, Coming Together, Making Connections, and Reflecting. An appendix is comprised of five articles: "Reading Like a Writer" (Frank Smith); "A Writer and an Author Collaborate" (Wayne Serebrin); "Could You Put in Lots of Holes?" (Russell A. Hunt); "Teacher as Partner in the Writing Process" (Nina Mikkelsen); and "The Risks of Whole Language Literacy" (Susan Harman and Carole Edelsky). (LL)